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LETTER DATED 20 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the attached letter addressed to you from Lloyd Axworthy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, on the conclusions of the special meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration, which was held in London on 18 October 1999. The meeting was convened to discuss the situation in Pakistan following the military takeover on 12 October. The concluding statement of the 18 October meeting is appended to the letter.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Robert R. FOWLER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada addressed to the President of the Security Council

I would like to bring to your attention the conclusions of the special meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration, which was held in London on 18 October 1999. The meeting was convened to consider the situation in Pakistan following the military takeover on 12 October. I have attached to the present letter the concluding statement of the 18 October meeting.

To summarize, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group unanimously condemned the unconstitutional overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Pakistan, and decided that the Pakistani military regime should forthwith be suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth. The Action Group called upon the military regime to set a time-frame for the restoration of democracy and to ensure the safety and legal rights of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and others who have been detained.

Next week I will lead a mission of the Action Group including ministers from Barbados and Ghana and the Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Malaysia to meet with the Pakistani regime. Our key objective will be to press for a clear timetable for the restoration of democracy. The mission will also make recommendations regarding Pakistan's membership of the Commonwealth and any further measures that might be taken should the military regime persist in violating the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. The mission will report back to the Group with a view to making recommendations to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban, South Africa, in mid-November. I will be happy to share this report with the Security Council.

I would be most grateful if you would bring the present letter and its appendix to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Lloyd AXWORTHY

Appendix

Concluding statement of the special meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration, held on 18 October 1999

1. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration met at Marlborough House, London, on 18 October 1999 to consider the situation in Pakistan following the military takeover of 12 October.

2. The Action Group unanimously condemned the unconstitutional overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Pakistan as a serious violation of the Commonwealth's fundamental political principles, as enshrined in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. The Group decided therefore that the Pakistani military regime should forthwith be suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth, including the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, pending the restoration of democracy in the country.[a]

3. The Action Group further called upon the military regime in Islamabad to set without delay a time-frame for the restoration of a democratically elected government.

4. The Action Group also called upon the regime of General Pervez Musharraf to uphold the safety, well-being and legal rights of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, other ministers and all others who have been detained.

5. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group agreed to dispatch a mission consisting of ministers from Canada (the leader), Barbados, Ghana and Malaysia to meet with the Pakistani regime and any public figures the mission deems appropriate; to press for a clear timetable for the restoration of democracy; to propose recommendations on the question of Pakistan's membership of the Commonwealth; and to recommend what further measures might be taken should the regime in Pakistan persist in violating the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. The mission would report back to the Group prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban, South Africa, in mid-November, and the Group would make recommendations to the Meeting in the light of its findings.

6. The meeting was chaired by I. S. G. Mudenge, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, and was attended by Billie A. Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Barbados, Lloyd Axworthy, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada, Victor Gbeho, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Tan Sri Dato' Musa bin Hitam, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Malaysia to the Action Group, and Robin Cook, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Botswana and New Zealand were represented by their High Commissioners to the United Kingdom.

Notes

[a] The implications of such suspension would be:

- The exclusion of representatives of the military regime, or nominees thereof, from participation at all intergovernmental Commonwealth meetings and in other intergovernmental Commonwealth activities, including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting;

- The suspension of the provision of any new Commonwealth technical assistance to Pakistan requested by the military government or its representatives. Technical assistance aimed at the restoration of civilian democratic rule, however, would be exempted from this suspension;

- Unless by instruction of the Secretary-General, no contact between the secretariat and the military regime or its representatives.